

PRESS RELEASE

Enterprises urge positive, constructive, rapid approach to European Institute of Technology

Meeting today in Brussels, European business leaders urged national and European politicians to throw their weight behind the European Institute for Technology (EIT) – converting the concept into a value adding reality in a short time frame.

Representing more than 19 million enterprises, the leaders of Europe's Chamber network endorsed the creation of the EIT, underscored the urgent need for a more innovative Europe and urged both public and private sectors to work quickly together to maximise the contribution of the EIT to the goals of growth and employment.

Ján Figel', EU Commissioner for Education and Training participated in the discussions.

EUROCHAMBRES supports the EIT, as the only programme that would integrate the three elements of the knowledge triangle. Today, there are a series of programmes that target research and innovation, innovation and education or education and research but never the three together.

- It is also the only one that would be operational. The EIT is not about exchanging best practices in networks but delivering content which can directly benefit sustainable development of innovation in Europe.
- The scale of the EIT is unique and goes well beyond excellent practices developed at local or national level.

Pierre Simon, President of EUROCHAMBRES, said: *"There is a shared onus on the business, academic and research communities together with the public authorities to address the EIT with enthusiasm and with a constructive mindset. For Europe, it is vital that we lead in innovation, not be led. It is vital that we view the EIT positively, not negatively, and it is vital that we find solutions, not problems when considering how to make the EIT operational."*

Mr Simon continued: *"The end result of the EIT should not be a measurement of how many new academic papers are published, or how many KICs have been created, or how much investment has been devoted to the initiative. The end result must be measured in economic activity, in new products and services created, in new patents filed, and royalties paid, in existing jobs saved and new jobs created. It must be real."*

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EUROCHAMBRES – The Association of European Chambers of Commerce and Industry represents 46 members, a European network of 2000 regional and local Chambers with over 19 million member enterprises in Europe.

Chambers raised a number of challenges at the round table, including:

How to secure private investment?

The success of the EIT relies on its capacity to attract private investors. The sooner the details of the EIT and its functioning, its objectives and its deliverables are clear, the sooner the business community will invest.

What role for SMEs?

EUROCHAMBRES warns against low participation of SMEs in KICs, especially in terms of matching long term objectives and participating in the decision-making process. Experience in SME-related technology and skills transfer must be explicitly considered in all steps of this European symbol of excellence in innovation, including in the Governing Board. The presence of business incubators like Chambers of Commerce should be valued in the selection of the KICs.

What will be the specificity of the EIT diplomas?

The regulation foresees that degrees and diplomas shall be awarded by universities belonging to KICs according to national rules and accreditation procedures. However it doesn't specify what for. EUROCHAMBRES believes that degrees or diplomas should prove a gain of experience in technology transfer such as participation in the registration of patents, or the demonstration of specific innovation or the setting up of university spin off.

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